

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 5898

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:

SUBJ: COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING

1. THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, PRESIDED OVER BY A VERY ACTIVE FRANCO, MET AUGUST 22ND TO DEAL WITH A NUMBER OF MATTERS, MOST NOTABLY THE ANTI-TERRORISM DECREE LAW AND FOUR DECREES CLARIFYING THE MANNER IN WHICH THE POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS WILL OPERATE.

2. PRIME MINISTER ARIAS WAS MUCH IN EVIDENCE AND APPEARS SAFE IN HIS POSITION, AT LEAST UNTIL THE NEXT ROUND OF SPECULATION ABOUT POLITICAL PERSONALITIES BEGINS. HE BROKE BREAD WITH FRANCO EARLIER IN THE WEEK AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT HEAD, SOLIS (RUMORED AS A POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR TO ARIAS) GAVE THE PUBLIC SIGNAL BY SCOFFING AT ALL THE SPECULATION ABOUT ARIAS'S REMOVAL IN WELL-PUBLICIZED PRESS INTERVIEWS.

3. IN A COMPANION MOVE TO THE CLARIFYING DECREES ON THE POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS, SOLIS AND FRAGA MEET TODAY ON PRESUMED NEUTRAL TERRITORY (A YACHT AT SEA) TO TALK OF MANY THINGS, PERHAPS INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF FRAGA'S CHANGING HIS MIND AND PARTICIPATING IN THE POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS' SCHEME. THIS TETE A TETE  
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FOLLOWS ON THE HEELS OF FRAGA'S MEETING WITH FRANCO.

4. THE TEXT OF THE ANTI-TERRORIST DECREE LAW - PRIVATELY DESCRIBED TO US AS TOUGH IS UNAVAILABLE AT WRITING. AFTER PROCEDURAL REVIEW BY THE CORTES, IT WILL BE PROMULGATED QUICKLY. GOS SPOKESMAN INDICATED IT WOULD EXPEDITE INVESTIGATION, ARREST, AND TRIAL OF TERRORISTS, PUNISHING THEM AND THOSE WHO AID THEM SEVERELY, PARTICULARLY IN CASES OF ATTACKS AGAINST FORCES OF PUBLIC ORDER. HE CLAIMED LAW WOULD HARMONIZE EFFECTIVE ACTION WITH LEAST DISRUPTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL FREEDOMS, AND CITED FRANCE, UK AND WEST GERMANY AS COUNTRIES WHICH ALSO HAD TAKEN OR WERE TAKING ADDITIONAL LEGAL MEASURES AGAINST TERRORISM. HE ALSO SAID, IN A PHRASE THAT HAS CAUSED RIPPLES IN THE LOCAL MEDIA, THAT THE LAW WOULD ENSURE THAT MEDIA REPORTING DOES NOT HANDICAP THE ANTI-TERRORIST CAMPAIGN.

5. WE WILL TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE ANTI-TERRORIST AND THE POLITICAL ASSOCIATION DECREES WHEN WE GET THE TEXTS. THE PROMULGATION OF THE POLITICAL ASSOCIATION DECREES MEETS ARIAS' TIMETABLE FOR THIS LEGISLATION AND IS DESIGNED TO SHOW THAT HE IS PROCEEDING WITH HIS PROGRAM AT A TIME WHEN THE GOS IS INSTITUTING A CONTROVERSIAL POLICE MEASURE. IN THE POLITICAL MANEUVERING AROUND FRAGA, ONE DETECTS THE FINE HAND OF SOLIS, SEEKING TO ROPE FRAGA INTO THE POLITICAL ASSOCIATION SCHEME OR AT LEAST TO KEEP HIM FROM BECOMING TROUBLESOME.  
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